

CARTE BLANCHE
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A SERMON
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DELIVERED BY C. H. SPURGEON
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"Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilst."
Matthew 15:28

I MEAN to dwell specially upon those words at the end of the verse, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilst," but before we consider them, I should like again to remind you, as I did in the reading, that our Lord admired this woman's faith. He said unto her, "O woman, great is thy faith." She was humble, she was patient, she was persevering, she was affectionate towards her child, but our Savior did not mention any of these things, for He was most of all struck by her faith. What other good things she had sprang out of her faith, so the Lord Jesus went at once to the root of the matter, and as it were, held up His hands in astonishment and exclaimed, "O woman, great is thy faith."

Her faith really was great, extremely great, when you consider that she was a Gentile, and one of a race that had ages before been doomed, the Canaanite race, in whose nature idolatry seemed to be ingrained, yet this woman showed that she had greater faith than many a Jew!

There are two cases of extraordinary faith recorded in the early part of Matthew's Gospel, and in both of these instances where our Savior expressed His astonishment at the greatness of the faith, the believers were Gentiles. Of the centurion at Capernaum He said, "Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel."

It is a wonderful thing when persons who have lived in ignorance and vice exhibit great faith. We are glad when those who have been brought up religiously and morally are led to believe in Christ, but we are often more astonished when the immoral, those who have previously known nothing of true godliness, are enabled by grace to exercise great faith in Christ.

"O woman, great is thy faith," said our Lord, for it was great even apart from her being a Gentile, for it had been sorely tried. Trials of faith from disciples are often very severe, but the disciples had put her aside, and even besought their Lord to "Send her away."

But trials of faith from the Master Himself are still more severe. To have Christ's deaf ear and mute lips—this was a trial indeed, and worse than that, to have rough words from such a loving and tender Teacher as He was, and even to be called a dog by the great Shepherd of Israel, and to be told that it was not meet to give her the children's bread—these were heavy tests of her confidence, but she had such faith that she bore up under all, and still pressed her suit with the Son of David, the Lord of mercy. We cannot but feel that Christ did her justice when He said, "O woman, great is thy faith."

Our Savior seems to have been specially struck with the ingenuity of her faith. Little faith always lacks ingenuity, it must have everything very plain or else it cannot move at all, but great faith makes crooked things straight, sees light in the midst of darkness, and gathers comfort out of discouragement.

For this woman to turn Christ's word inside out, as it were, and when He said, "It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs," for her to say, in effect, "I do not ask to have it cast to me, only let me have the crumbs which fall by accident from the children themselves when they have brought the dogs under the table"—this was indeed extraordinary faith and wonderful pleading. "If You will heal my daughter, there will be none the less of Your marvelous power for the children of Israel, for You can heal them too. If You do give me this that I ask—great as it is to me, it is only like a crumb to

You, Your table is so lavishly provided for by Your omnipotence of grace. Even this great boon that I ask of You will be nothing more to You than a chance crumb that falls from the children's table."

This was splendid pleading, and the Savior saw the force of it at once. He loves ingenuity on the part of those who come to Him. He is so ingenious Himself in devising means of bringing back His banished ones, that He is glad to see ingenuity in the banished ones themselves when they desire to come back to Him. He therefore cries in holy astonishment, "O woman, great is thy faith."

Taking the case of the woman as a whole, I think that it must have been her pertinacity, her firmness that surprised the Lord. Others are so easily put off, but she would not be put off. Others need encouragement, but she encouraged herself. When the door is shut in her face, she only knocks at it, and when Christ calls her "Dog," she only picks up what Christ has said, as a good dog will pick up his master's stick, and bring it right to His feet.

There was no baffling her. If all the devils in hell had been about the business, not merely that terrible one that possessed her daughter, she would have beaten them all, for she had such faith—shall I not say—such dogged faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, that she could even get comfort out of being called a dog. She had such resolute faith that she must have what she sought, and she would not go away without it. If she does not succeed at first, she will battle on until she does win the victory, she will continue pleading till she carries her suit.

Our Lord was not only, to speak after the manner of men, astonished at her faith, but with reverence we may say that He was conquered by it. He yielded to her faith, and He yielded unconditionally. He gave her much more than she asked, for she had not asked that her daughter might be healed the selfsame hour. She had hardly got as far as the asking at all, and as to mentioning the details, she had only pleaded with Him in general, but Christ gave her definitely what He knew she wished for, and gave it to her at once.

And what is more, He did, as it were, hand her over the keys of His house. "There," said He, "my good woman, I so admire your faith that I say to you, Go and help yourself. You may have whatever you like. Whatever treasure of grace I have is yours if you want it, be it unto thee even as thou wilt." He gave her the keys of the heavenly cash-box.

Some time ago, a lady wishing to help the Orphanage, sent me a check, and she did a very unwise thing indeed, for she signed the check, but she did not fill up the amount. Never do that, you see I might have put all her fortune down, and filled up the check for any amount that the lady had in the bank. She evidently trusted me very largely, but I sent her check back to her, saying that I did not know what amount to put down. Of course, she intended to give a guinea, or £5, or something of the kind, but she forgot to say how much, and that is a very dangerous plan indeed with most people.

So our Savior gave this woman a blank check. "Fill it up for what you like," He said. "Great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt. Whatever it is that you wish for, you shall have. Your faith has won from Me this boon, that I now put at your disposal all My power to bless. Be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

I am going to talk specially about that point, and first, I will try to answer the question, *How far did this carte blanche extend?* Then, secondly, *when is it safe for the Lord to give such a cart blanche as that?* And thirdly, *if He did give us such power, how would we use it?*

I. First then, dear friends, HOW FAR DID THIS CARTE BLANCHE EXTEND when the Savior said to the woman, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt"?

In answer to which I would say, first, that it went so far as *to baffle all the powers of hell*. This woman's child was grievously vexed with a devil, and we read, "her daughter was made whole from that very hour." "For this saying, go thy way," said Christ, according to Mark's account, "the devil is gone out of thy daughter."

Now Satan is very mighty, there is not one of us, nor all of us put together, who can be equally matched with him. He takes small account of ten thousand men, he is more crafty and cunning than all the wise men, and more powerful than all the mighty men who ever came together, and yet the Savior

seems to say, "I have heard you, good woman, I have seen your faith, I will rebuke the demon, I will send the evil spirit back to his own place, and your child shall be snatched out of his cruel grasp."

Beloved, if you have faith enough, Christ will give you power even to cast out devils. If you can only trust Him, trust Him without measure or stint, and believe in Him as this woman did, He will give you power to make Satan fall like lightning from heaven, and flee before you. "Jesus I know," said the evil spirit at Corinth, "and Paul I know," and the devil still knows those who make him know them. Through faith in Jesus, they speak to him with authority, and he must flee from them.

So, if you have faith, you shall resist the devil, and even he, powerful as he is, shall turn his back and flee from you, and as Luther said, though there were as many devils as the tiles upon the housetops, yet would faith in God give you grace to vanquish them all. Remember that glorious promise, "The God of peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." So this *carte blanche*, when He said to the woman, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt," meant, "The devils themselves are now subject to thy will."

Next, it meant that it was the will of the Lord *to heal her daughter completely*. She had come all the way from Syrophoenicia to the borders of the land of Israel that she might plead with Christ about her daughter, her dear child, perhaps her only child. This sorrow pressed very heavily on her heart, so she cried unto the Lord, "Have mercy on me." She so identified herself with her child that she did not know any difference between herself and her child. They had seemed to grow into one in the great trouble that they had at home. I have known many a mother who certainly would far rather have suffered herself than that her child should suffer, so completely had she identified herself with her child.

Now, beloved, if you can plead with Christ with this woman's heroic faith, if you can fully believe in Him, and not dare to doubt Him, you shall have your children put at your disposal. He will deal graciously with them—with the girl for whom you are pleading, with the boy over whom your heart is aching. He will say to you, dear mother, "O woman, great is thy faith; be it unto thee even as thou wilt." The boy shall repent, the girl shall believe, the children shall come to Jesus' feet, and become your comfort and joy through their early conversion to Christ. Is not this a great blessing?

Ay, and the woman had such faith in Christ that this blank check further meant her *to have this boon at once*. "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt, now, at once." So she willed at once, of course, that the devil should go out of her daughter, and out the devil had to go, for her will had become God's will, and Christ had infused into her will a mighty power which even Satan could not resist.

Oh, if you have faith enough, you may get the blessing you desire even now! It may be that while sitting in this Tabernacle, breathing a prayer for your child, God may bless your child before you get home. If you can but have faith enough, He has power enough, and if He deigns to say, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt," I know that it will be your will, not that your girl may be converted when she becomes a woman, not that your boy may be saved when he becomes a man, but that the blessed miracle may be wrought at once, even now.

What parents want to let the devil have their children even for an hour? O Jesus, turn him out at once! Let us see our children, our children's children, our brothers and sisters and friends, converted now, for while now is the accepted time with God, now is the time which every earnest Christian will prefer for the conversion of those for whom he prays. A splendid promise is this concerning great blessings to be had, and to be had at once, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

I must go a little further, and say that I think our Lord, when He said to the woman, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt," permitted her *to eat the children's bread*. She had before said, "The little dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters' table," and "then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." I think this means that instead of having the privilege to go and roam like a dog under the table, and eat what she could pick up, she was made into a child, and was permitted to sit at the table, and eat of all that the Lord had provided.

O poor sinner, you came in here tonight feeling like a whipped dog, did you not? You said to yourself, "There will not be anything for me in the sermon," but by and by, as you heard of the great grace of Christ to this poor woman, you thought that there might be hope even for you, and now you

begin to think that there is a possibility that even you may be blessed. Well, well, I venture to say to you that if you wish to eat the children's bread, you may. "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Lord, we do not ask of You that we may be treated better than the rest of Your family! If any of you pray to God to make a distinction, and to give you more than He gives His other children, I do not think you are likely to get it.

If you come to Christ, as Mrs. Zebedee did, and begin asking that James and John may sit, the one at His right hand and the other at His left, you will not get what you ask, but if you say, "O Lord, You are my God, I love Your people, let me fare as they do. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness. I do not ask to be exempt from tribulation, for all the heirs of salvation have to endure it. I only ask that I may eat what Your children eat. If they have bread, Lord, I will be happy to have bread, I ask for no dainties. If they drink water from the rock Lord, let me have a draught of the same, I ask for nothing more."

Jesus says, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt. If you are content to sit at the table with My children, come along with you. If you sigh after their bread, which came down from heaven, if you will take 'scot and lot' with them, there is nothing to hinder you. Be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

Surely also, when the Savior spoke thus to the Syrophenician woman, He meant to make reference to her first prayer. She cried unto Him, saying, "*Have mercy on me, O LORD, thou Son of David.*" "Yes," said He, "now be it unto thee even as thou wilt. I have mercy on you. If you have sinned, I forgive you. If you are hard of heart, I will soften your heart. If you have been an ignorant heathen, I will enlighten you, and bring you to my feet. I will be to you the Son of David, and you shall be one of my own chosen people, and I will care for you, and protect you, and deliver you, as David did the many for whom he fought."

O souls, if any one of you are crying, "Lord have mercy upon me," if you have faith in Christ—and He deserves to be trusted, there is none like Him, He deserves to be trusted without a single doubt, for He never failed anyone, and He never lied to anyone, therefore let no wicked mistrust come in to weaken your faith—if you can trust Him, He says to you, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Take mercy, take mercy, and more mercy, and yet more mercy. Come to the table of love, and sit among the children of the Lord, and feed on heavenly bread. Put up your prayer for your child, pleading the promise to the jailor, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, *and your house.*"

Come to Christ with all the torment you have felt from the devil's possession of you, the horrible thoughts, the blasphemous insinuations, the desperate doubts, and hear the Savior say to you, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." The devil shall be made to depart from you. Your poor head shall lose the fever from the burning brow, your heart shall beat at its even pace, and you shall be at peace again. The Lord shall rebuke your adversary. In this confidence, say unto the demon even now, "Rejoice not against me, O my enemy: when I fall, I shall arise."

Oh, this is a grand, grand word from our Lord's lips! It is a wonderful check, signed by our Savior's own hand, and left blank for faith to fill up. We might have half thought that He would have said, "O woman, your faith is too big for Me to trust you with unlimited prayer. If you had only a little faith, I would go as far as your little faith would go, and keep pace with you." But no, no, that is not Christ's method of acting. He says, "O woman, great is thy faith and as you can trust *Me*, I can trust *you*. Cry as you will, for so be it unto you. You have firmly resolved to have no doubt about My power and willingness, and to trust Me without reserve, so I trust you without reserve, be it unto you even as you will."

II. So now I pass to our second question, which is this. WHEN IS IT SAFE FOR THE LORD TO TRUST ANYBODY WITH SUCH A PROMISE AS THIS, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt"?

It would be very unsafe thus to trust some of you. Why, there is one man here who, if it was said to him, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt," would at once pray for—well, I do not know how many thousand pounds, but when he got home, he would be discontented and say, "What a fool I was not to ask for two or three times as much!"

Ah! yes, yes, yes, but the Lord does not trust greedy people in that way. Not while there is any idea of your own merit left, will Christ trust you at all. Not while there is a fraction of self-will left, will Christ trust you at all, and not while doubt remains. That must go, for the whole verse says, "O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." He trusts faith, He will not trust unbelief, he will not trust self-confidence, he will not trust human merit, but where there is faith, there He gives the keys of His treasury and says, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

When will the Lord thus trust us? Well, I think, first, *when we agree with Christ*, when we are like this woman who had no quarrel with the Savior. Whatever He said was right in her eyes. If He called her a dog, she said, "Truth, Lord." When you and Christ agree, and there is no quarrel between you, then He says, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt." If you do not yield to Him, He will not yield to you, but when you just end all disputing and say, "Lord, I have done with all quibbling and quarrelling, I will never raise another question, and never harbor another doubt. I believe You. I believe You. As a child believes its mother, I believe You. When I cannot understand You, when You do distress me, still I believe You." Ah! when you come to that point, then the Lord will say, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

Next, *when our soul is taken up with proper desires*. This woman had no idea of asking for a hundred thousand shekels of silver, or a wedge of gold, or a goodly Babylonian garment. One thought alone possessed her—"My child! My child! Oh, that the devil might be cast out of my child!" "Now," says Christ, "be it unto thee even as thou wilt." And when you have great desires for heavenly things, when your desires are such as God approves of, when you will what God wills, then you may will what you like. When it comes to this, that you have dropped your own desires of an inferior and groveling kind, and you are taken up with desires for necessary things, desires that come to you from Christ Himself, when you desire the bread, not from the devil's oven, but from Christ's table, when that is what you crave, then it shall be unto you even as you will.

Next, it shall be to us even as we will *when we see our Lord in His true office*. This woman saw that Christ was a Healer, and she appealed to Him as a Healer. If you see Christ as Prophet, Priest, and King, you may go and ask of Him as a Prophet what a prophet is ordained to give, or as a Priest what a priest is intended to bestow, or as a King what a king is set upon the throne to do. You may go to Christ as He really is, and if you see that He is ordained for this purpose and for that, then keep in tune with what He is ordained to be, and you may ask what you will, and it shall be done unto you.

You must not try to take Christ away from His offices. Christ is not sent of God to make you a rich man, He is sent of God to make you a saved man, so you may go to Him as a Savior, for that is His office. You may go to Him as a Priest, for it is His office to cleanse, to offer sacrifice, to make intercession. Take Christ as God sets Him forth, and then be it unto you even as you will.

Next, it will be to us even as we will *when we can believe about the distinct object that is before us*. This woman pleaded for her child. All her faith went out towards her child. I love the prayer that has in it faith concerning the thing for which it pleads. There are many Christian people who say they have faith about twenty things, but then the thing that they cannot believe about is the twenty-first. You must have a faith that can not only cover twenty-one things, but that can cover everything.

We say, "Oh! I could believe if my trouble were like So-and-so's." You could not believe at all unless you can believe about your present trouble, and you must believe about the object for which you are praying, that it can be given you, that it will be given you in answer to your prayer, and then Jesus will say to you, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

Again, we can have whatever we like *when our heart seeks only God's glory*, when what we pray for is not for wealth, nor with a desire for our own honor, but when even what we want for ourselves is asked with the higher motive that God may be glorified in us by our obtaining such and such a gift, or being delivered from such and such a trial. When God's glory is your one aim, you may ask what you will, and it shall be given unto you.

And above all, when we always keep to what I have already mentioned, *when we only ask for the children's bread*, then the Lord will give us what we crave. If you ask for what God gives His elect, for

what Christ has bought for His redeemed, if you ask for what the Holy Ghost works in the minds of men converted by His power, if you ask for what God has promised, if you ask for what it is customary for God to bestow upon His waiting people, then “be it unto thee even as thou wilt.”

No wild fancy, no rhapsody, no whim that makes you wish for this or that, is worthy to come within the compass of my text, but that which the Lord waits to give you, that which He knows would be good for you, that which will be an honor to Him, and which will help you to honor Him, you may ask without any stammering or fear, and you shall have it, for He says to you, “Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.”

I do not know, but I think that I am speaking personally to somebody here in trouble, who has been long pleading and praying, and has never got an answer yet. “Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.” Hannah, the woman of a sorrowful spirit, sits in this house, bowed down in soul, and pouring out before the Lord her silent prayer. Let her take this message from the Lord’s servant, or better still, from the Lord Himself, “Be it unto thee even as thou wilt.” But then I only dare to say it to one to whom I could also say, “O woman, great is thy faith.”

If you have not any faith, how are you to have it? Here is a soup kitchen opened for the poor, and they are told to bring their jugs, their mugs, their basins—anything they like. A woman comes and says, “I have not a mug.” “Have you a basin?” “No.” Well, you say to her, “You can have the soup,” but then, you see, she cannot carry it home without a basin, or a jug. So, here is the mercy of God, and many lack it, here is a blessing rich and rare, and many cannot carry it home because they have no faith, but Christ could say to the Syrophenician, “O woman, great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt.”

II. Now I finish by asking another question. Suppose this blank check to be given to us, HOW WILL IT BE USED?

Well, first, *I should use it upon that thing about which I have been praying most.* I will not say what it is. This woman had been praying most about her daughter, so, when the Savior said, “Be it unto thee even as thou wilt,” she did not say a single word, but she just willed in her mind that the devil should be driven out of her daughter. Oh, that you might have faith enough to be able to will the right thing! If Christ leaves His own will in your hands, and feels safe in doing so, oh, will strongly! It is for God, you know, to give a fiat, but Christ here gives a fiat to the woman.

As I read the text, He says to her, “Be it unto thee”—“So let it be.” “Be it so,” says He, “as thou wilt.” Behold, the fiat of God goes forth to you, believer, to let it be even as you do will it to be. Now, can you not will for the child for whom you have been praying? Do you not will for the congregation that lies on your heart? Do you not will for that friend with whom you have been speaking in order to try to bring him to Christ? Will for the distinct object for which you have been praying, and then, may the will of the Lord be done, and may your will also be done because it is an echo of the will of the Lord!

Next, I think that if we had this said to each one of us, “Be it unto thee even as thou wilt,” *we should first will our own salvation.* Pray, as we sang just now—

*“With my burden I begin,
Lord, remove this load of sin;
Let Thy blood, for sinners spilt,
Let my conscience free from guilt.*

*“Lord! I come to Thee for rest,
Take possession of my breast;
There Thy blood-bought right maintain,
And without a rival reign.”*

Let each one of us pray, “Lord, save me! Lord, make sure work of it, save me from sin, save me from self, save me from everything that dishonors You.” I was talking the other day, with a man who was saying that he attended a ministry where he heard very little about holy living. He thought that he

was a believer, though he was living in sin, and continued to live in sin. He knows now that he was no believer, or else he could not have lived in sin as he did, and now he prays to God not for salvation while he is living in sin, but for salvation from sin. So, we will first ask of God our own full salvation, and we know that His answer will be, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

Have we not all a prayer also for our children, or our friends, or those who lie near to our hearts? Then let us pray on, with great faith, till we hear Christ say, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt," and then let us go home, and expect to see the work of grace begun in our children. Watch for it, O parent, and carefully nurture it as soon as you see the first beginnings of it! About this matter also Jesus says, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

I think that if I were asked to pray now for something very special, and that I might have whatever I asked, my prayer would be, "Lord, make me grow in grace. Give me more faith. If I have great faith, give me more. If I have much love to You, give me more love to You. If I know my Lord, I pray that I may know more of Him, and know Him to a fuller and more intense degree." My prayer shall be—

*"Nearer, my God, to Thee,
Nearer to Thee."*

Let that be the prayer of each one of you to whom it is left to fill up this blank check.

Then there is another prayer that I am sure I would remember, if nobody else here did, and that would be concerning Christ's kingdom. If it is to be unto me as I will, then I will it that God's truth should be preached everywhere, and that false doctrines should be made to fly like chaff before the wind. If our prayer be heard, and we are permitted to have what we will, our will is that God may send us Luthers and Calvins, and brave men like John Knox back again, men with bones in their backs, and fire on their lips, with hearts that burn and words that glow with holy fervor, we want them so badly now.

The Lord have mercy upon the Free Church of Scotland, and give her back faithful covenanting men and women! The Lord have mercy upon our own poor denomination, and give us those who love the truth of God, and dare to stand up for it come what may! Oh, for such a prayer as that! Lord, revive Your church! Lord, lift up a banner because of the truth! Lord, put Your adversaries to the rout!

*"Fight for Thyself, O Jesus, fight,
The travail of Thy soul regain!"*

Oh, to hear in our hearts this gracious word from the King Himself, as we plead with Him concerning His kingdom, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

By and by, you and I shall lie sick and ill, and they will say, "His days are numbered." Then, if the Lord shall visit us in answer to our prayers, and whisper to us, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt," oh then, the promise will read in a very different sense from what I can read it now! Then will the poor tent begin to be taken down, well, it never was worth much. Fearfully and wonderfully made is this mortal frame, but it is capable of bringing us great pain and much sorrow, and also of deadening our devotion, and hampering us in our work for God. "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak."

"Ah, well!" says the Lord, "you shall be rid of your flesh one day. It shall be unto thee even as thou wilt." You have sung sometimes—

*"Father, I long, I faint to see
The place of Thine abode;
I'd leave Thine earthly courts, and flee
Up to Thy seat, my God!"*

"Be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

A dear sister who was buried today, said when they told her that she could not live another day, “Does it not seem wonderful? Is it not a grand thing to know that I am going to see the Lord Jesus Christ today?” And she lay on her bed saying this to all who came, “It seems too good to be true that I should be so near that for which I have longed those many years, I am going today to see the King in His beauty.”

Ah, thank God, we too shall come to that last day of our earthly life! Unless the Lord descend quickly, we too shall come to our dying bed, and then we shall hear our Savior say, “Be it unto thee even as thou wilt,” and oh! we shall will to see His face, and to be forever with the Lord, and to praise Him with infinite rapture forever and ever. Blessed be His name, we have faith to believe that it will be even so.

Then we will tell Him what we cannot tell Him now, how much we love Him, how deeply we feel our indebtedness to Him, and we will give all the glory of our salvation to His holy name forever and ever. God grant that this may be the happy lot of every one of us, for our Lord Jesus Christ’s sake! Amen.

HYMNS FROM “OUR OWN HYMN BOOK”—327, 978, 980

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON:

MATTHEW 15:21-28

Verse 21. *Then Jesus went thence,—*

He was glad to get away from the scribes and Pharisees, who had been disputing about such trifles as the washing of His disciples’ hands, He was tired of the murmuring of these cantankerous, frivolous triflers.

21. *And departed to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon.*

He felt that He would rather be with “sinners of the Gentiles” than with these Ritualistic and hypocritical Hebrews. He will get as far away from them as He well can, He will go even to the heathen, for among them He will be able to do His real business, and not be trifled with.

22. *And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts,—*

When sinners come to Christ, it is because Christ comes to them. Notice the two statements, how they coincide. Jesus “departed to the coasts of Tyre and Sidon,” and this “woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts,” and so they met. Oh, that there might be such a meeting here tonight, between someone who has come from a long distance to meet Christ, and Christ who has come on purpose to meet that person!

22. *And cried unto him, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.*

The devil had extraordinary power at that time, so that he possessed the bodies and minds of men. I am not certain that there are not instances of Satan’s possession even now amongst us, there are cases that look very much like it, but in the Savior’s day there were evidently singular and remarkable possessions of men and women by Satan. This poor mother says, “My daughter is grievously vexed with a devil.”

23. *But he answered her not a word.*

Has the Savior become deaf and dumb? Will He not hear a suppliant cry? He heard her, but He said nothing.

23. *And his disciples came and besought him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.*

“She is a stranger, and as far as we can judge, she means to hang on until she gets what she wants. If you will not give it to her, bid her be gone, for she cries after us.” One thing I notice that they said, which was not true, “She crieth after us.” Not she! She never cried after them, she was crying after

Christ, she would have pleaded in vain if she had cried after them, for all they had to say was, “Send her away.” A very different result came from her crying unto the Lord.

24. *But he answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the house of Israel.*

As a Preacher and a Teacher, Christ came to administer to the circumcision, the Jews, the seed of Israel. He did not go about among the nations, it was His work to be a witness to the Jews. As a Preacher, He must begin somewhere, and He chose to begin with them. “I am not sent,” said He, therefore, how could He go if He was not sent? Our Savior had a greater regard to the sending of the Father than some preachers have, for they run before they are sent, sometimes they run when they are never sent at all, but as Paul asked, “How shall they preach, except they be sent?”

25. *Then came she and worshipped him, saying, Lord, help me.*

She takes a humbler attitude than she had at first assumed. She comes closer, and she is more earnest and personal in her pleading than she had been, “Lord help me.” Her prayer is shorter than it was at first, and I think that, when prayers grow shorter, they grow stronger. There is often more proof of earnestness in a short prayer than there is in a long one, glibness of speech is not prevalence in intercession.

26-27. *But he answered and said, It is not meet to take the children’s bread, and to cast it to dogs. And she said, Truth, Lord:*

You remember the sermon that we had upon this text not long ago [See sermon #2129, Pleading, Not Contradiction]. The woman did not contradict the Savior, she did not enter into any controversy with Him, but she said, “Truth, Lord.” Whatever He says however black the words may look to her, she accepts them as true, and says, “Truth, Lord.”

27. *Yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.*

When the children drop crumbs, then the little dogs which have been fondled by the children feed on the crumbs which fall, not from “the” master’s table, but from “their masters’ table”—that is, from the table of the children.

28. *Then Jesus answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy faith:*

He seems quite amazed at the woman’s faith, but He admires it, and exclaims, “O woman, great is thy faith.”

28. *Be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her daughter was made whole from that very hour.*

It was as she wished, and she went home to glorify the Christ, and to tell everybody how her prayer to Him had sped.

Taken from The Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit C. H. Spurgeon Collection. Only necessary changes have been made, such as correcting spelling errors, some punctuation usage, capitalization of deity pronouns, and minimal updating of a few archaic words. The content is unabridged. Additional Bible-based resources are available at www.spurgeongems.org.